



Washington's Public Health System: Structure and Standards

Presentation to the Joint Select Committee on
Public Health Finance

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Committee Road Map

- Last Meeting: **What is public health?** How is the public health system structured? What does public health do, and how are these activities funded?
- This Meeting: **How well are we doing?** How do we measure the performance of the public health system? Are there gaps in our performance?
- Next: **Is that good enough?** What are the consequences of any performance gaps? What does this mean for Washington residents? How do we compare to others? What matters most?
- And then: **What, if anything, should the Legislature do?** Additional funding? How much? For what? From where? Other options?



What is public health? How is it structured?



“Public Health” is . . .

- **RCW 43.70.575:** “Activities that society does collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. This includes organized community efforts to prevent, identify, preempt, and counter threats to the public’s health.”
- **RCW 70.38.025:** “The level of well-being of the general population; those actions in a community necessary to preserve, protect, and promote the health of the people for which government is responsible; and the governmental system developed to guarantee the preservation of the health of the people.”

Public Health v. Medical Treatment

■ Public Health

- Focus on health status of populations
- Public service ethic, tempered by concerns for the individual
- Emphasis on prevention and health promotion
- Activated all of the time

■ Medical Treatment

- Focus on clinical improvement of individuals patients
- Personal service ethic, conditioned by awareness
- Emphasis on diagnosis and cure
- Activated when a person is injured or ill

The Functions of Public Health

1. Protecting people from disease

- Sexually-Transmitted Disease; Tuberculosis; HIV/AIDS; Other Communicable Disease; Immunizations; Laboratory; CHILD Profile; Other Non-Communicable Disease

2. Assuring for a healthy environment

- Drinking Water Quality; Solid and Hazardous Waste; On-Site Sewage and Land Development; Vector Control; Food; Chemical and Physical; Living Environments

The Functions of Public Health

3. Prevention and health promotion

- Chronic Disease Prevention (Cancer Prevention and Control; Cardiovascular Risk Reduction; Tobacco Prevention and Control; Violence and Injury Prevention)
- Family and Social Health Issues (Children with Special Health Care Needs; WIC; General Health Education; Maternal/Infant/Child/Adolescent Health)

The Functions of Public Health

4. Access to health services

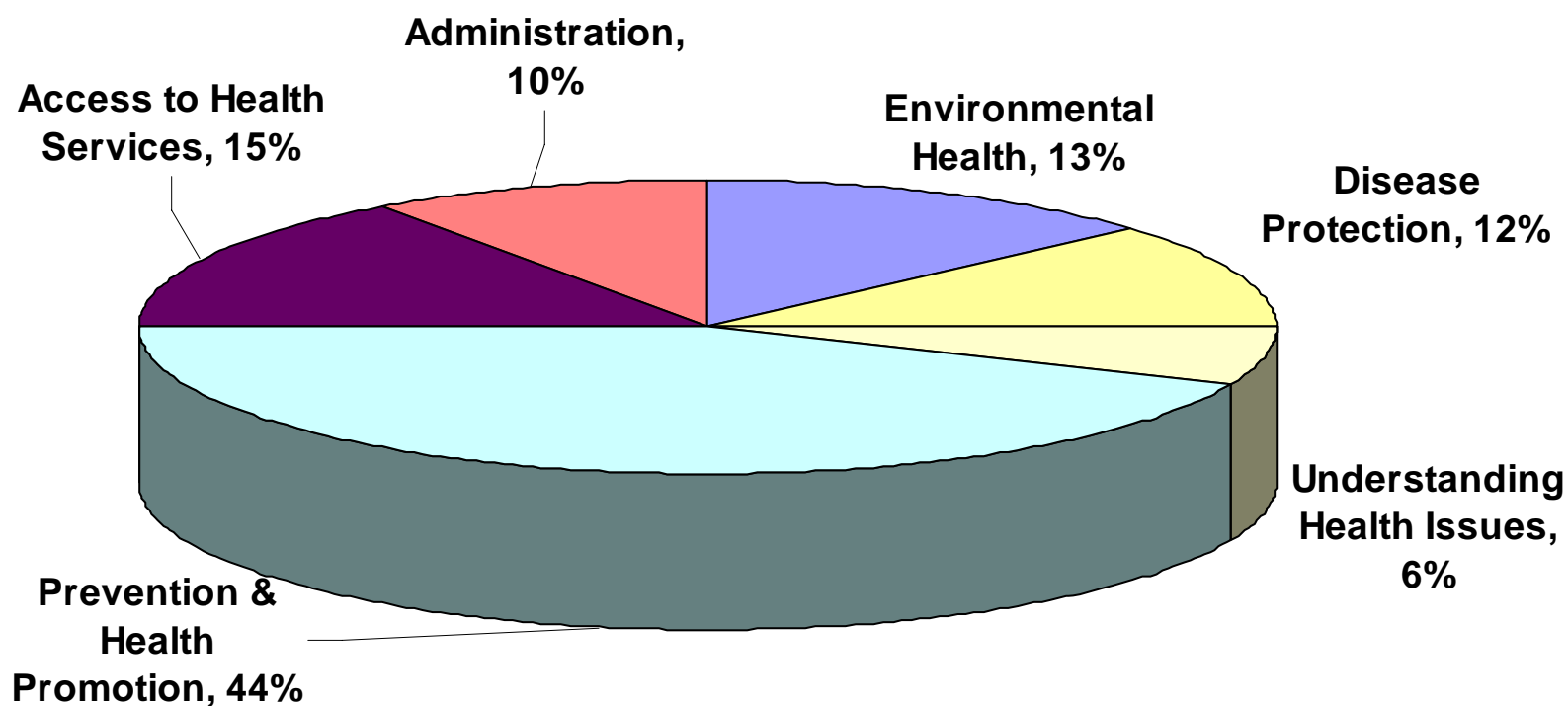
- Family Planning; Family Resource; Oral Health; Other Family and Individual Health

5. Understanding health issues

- Vital Records; Epidemiology; Assessment Activities; Bioterrorism; Child Death Review

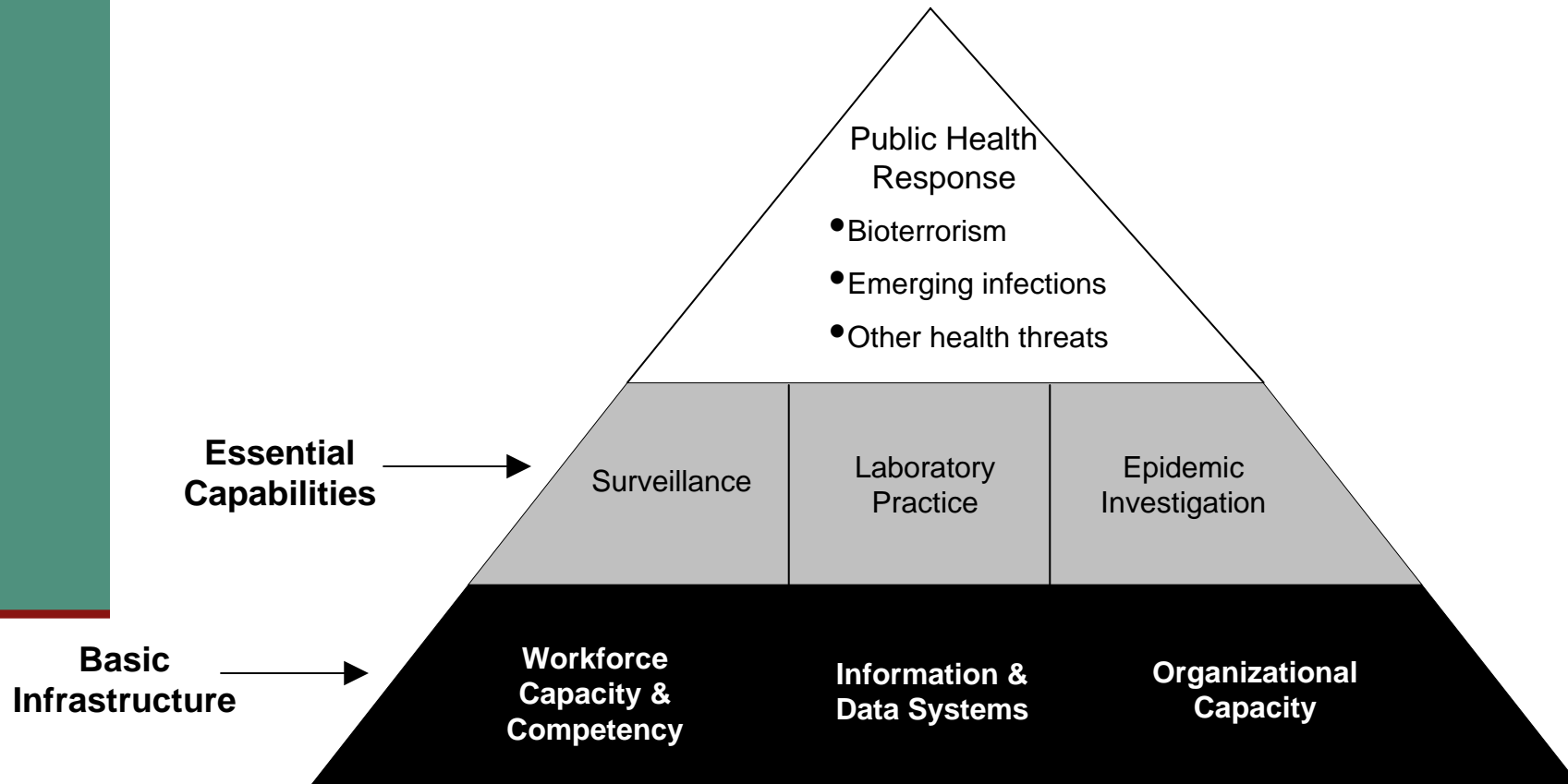
Public Health Functions

**Combined State- and Local-Level Spending
FY2004 = \$589 million**



* The charts depicting FY04 expenditures exclude \$18-\$23 million of fee-supported state Department of Health professional licensing and regulatory activities.

Building Blocks: The Public Health Infrastructure



The State Board of Health (RCW 43.20)

- Independent 10-member Board appointed by the Governor
- Forum for the development of public health policy
- No enforcement authority, but adopts rules regarding:
 - Drinking water quality
 - Control and abatement of health hazards and nuisances related to waste disposal
 - Disease prevention and control
 - Cleanliness of facilities
 - Isolation and quarantine
 - Other Misc.

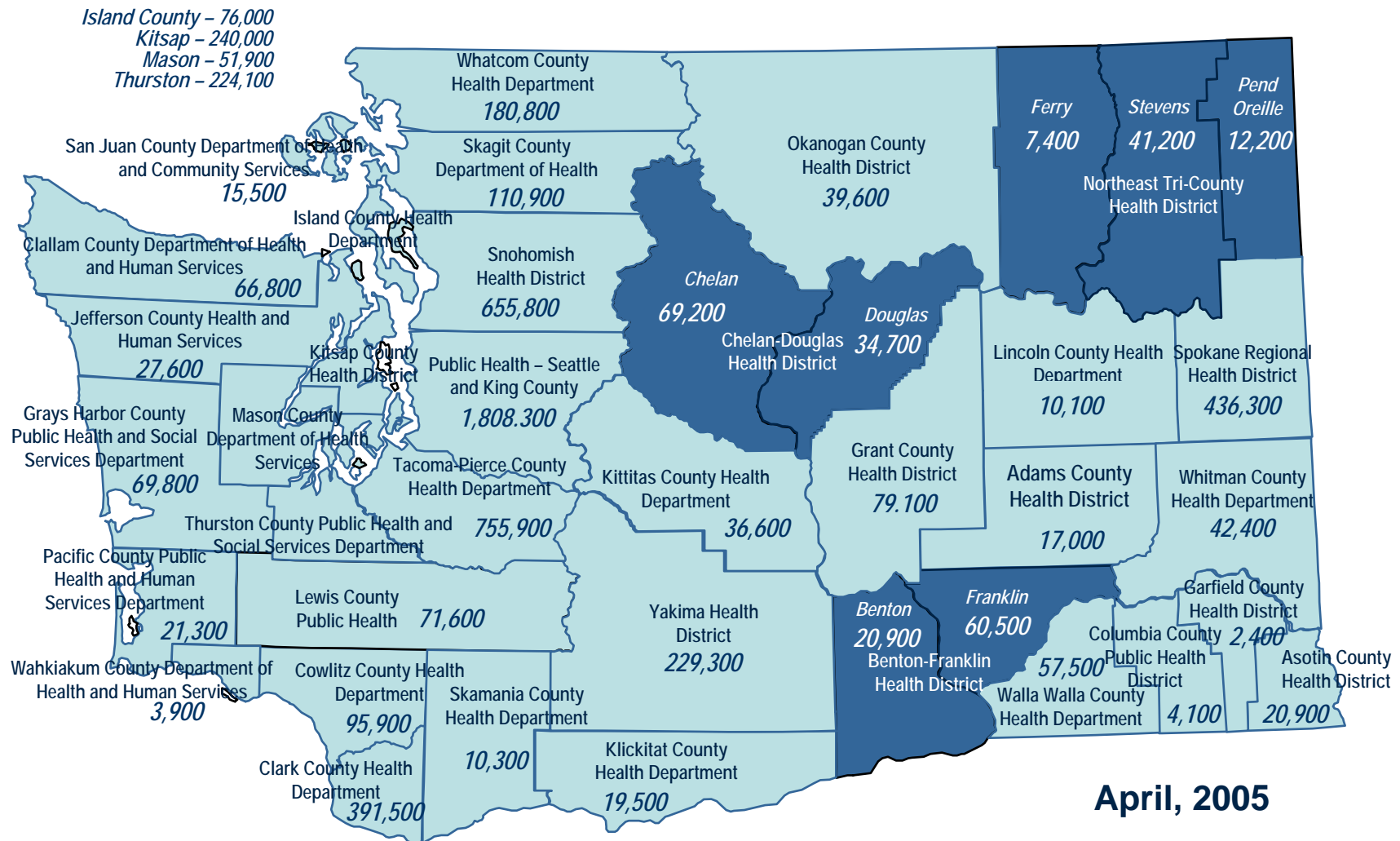
The State Department of Health (RCW 43.70)

- Collects and analyzes public health and health care data; maintains birth, death, marriage and divorce statistics.
- Provides public health services and public health laboratory.
- Assure minimum standards of quality for health care providers and facilities.
- Monitors environmental health measures that affect humans
- Strengthen state and local health partnerships
- Public Health Improvement Plan

Local Health Jurisdictions

- RCW 70.05.060 - 070
 - Enforce state public health laws
 - Enact and enforce local public health laws
 - Maintain health and sanitation supervision
 - Control and prevent the spread of disease
 - Inform the public regarding disease prevention and health promotion
 - Prevent, control and abate nuisances which are detrimental to public health
 - Inspect water systems
 - Such measures necessary to promote the public health

WASHINGTON STATE LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS (& population served)



How is the performance of the public health system measured? Are there gaps?



Public Health Improvement Plan Background

- Department of Health has statutory obligation to develop PHIP every two years.
- PHIP developed in consultation with local health jurisdictions, Board of Health, other state agencies, area Indian health service, health services providers, and public.
- 2004 PHIP is the sixth edition.

Public Health Improvement Plan

Elements of the PHIP

- RCW 43.70.520 requires the PHIP to include:
 - Definition of minimum standards for public health;
 - List of communities not meeting those standards
 - A budget and staffing plan for bringing those communities up to minimum standards;
 - Costs and benefits of adopting minimum standards.
 - Strategies for improving public health programs throughout the state;
 - Recommended levels of public health funding:
 - As a percentage of total health services spending, or
 - As a set per person amount.

PHIP Standards

- PHIP standards *do not* establish target health and outcome indicators (eg., disease rates, smoking rates, injury rates).
- PHIP standards *do* measure the capacity of public health agencies to provide services that support each of the five functions of public health.

PHIP Standards

- Five topic areas corresponding to the five public health functions.
- Each function has four to five standards for the whole government public health system.
- Each standard has specific measures for local health jurisdictions and other measures for the state Department of Health.

PHIP Standards

- Public Health Function A

- Standard 1

- Measures for local health jurisdictions
 - Measures for state Department of Health

- Standard 2

- Measures for local health jurisdictions
 - Measures for state Department of Health

- Standard 3

- Measures for local health jurisdictions
 - Measures for state Department of Health

PHIP Standards Measurements

- The performance of each local health jurisdiction has been independently evaluated for how well it meets the PHIP standards.
- Assessments are expressed in terms of how often public health agencies are meeting each of the measures within each standard.